

Cover Letter and Resume Writing Assignment

Bring 2 paper copies (typed) to class for peer review AND submit an electronic copy via Canvas by the due date. All assignments should be free of typos and grammatical errors. Remember to include good topic sentences to make the documents easy to scan and understand quickly.

Professional job description, cover letter and resume

A strong cover letter and resume (sometimes referred to as a Curriculum Vitae, or CV) is often the first opportunity a job applicant has of being noticed and securing an interview. These documents should be brief and to the point, highlighting the most important strengths, skills and experiences that make you a great candidate. The purpose of the cover letter and resume is to demonstrate that you meet or exceed the requirements listed in the job description. The letter should convey that you are interested in the position and that you are available to accept the position, if offered.

Many of the guidelines for professional emails are applicable to cover letters. Additional tips and pointers are available online. Rather than following a boring template, your letter should be personal and stand out in a pile of 100 or more other letters.

In this assignment, you are asked to submit

- (1) a job advertisement / description that you have found or written
- (2) a professional one-page cover letter tailored to this job description
- (3) a professional one-page resume tailored to this job description

Prepare your letter and resume as if you were applying for the specific position at the specific company or organization in the ad / job description (e.g., tsunami modeling intern at NOAA; entry-level staff geologist, Landau Associates, an environmental consulting firm; position for “University Student Seeking an Internship/ Student Placement” at ExxonMobil; Research Assistant in IsoLab; job opportunities here: <http://www.engeo.com/geotechnicalcareers/>). Feel free to target a fictional or real job opportunity. There is no need to use fancy paper or letterhead.

Please refer to additional guidelines and pointers from class and from assigned readings.

Writer:

Reviewer:

Grading Rubric (cover letter):

| 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Structure: Poor organization at document and sentence scale. First sentence does not state purpose. Beginning does not make audience want to keep reading. Reader is left with little sense for the message. | | Structure: effective organization at either document or sentence scale. One or two items could be more effective in a different place (e.g., first sentence does not state purpose). | | Structure: effective organization at both document and sentence scale. First sentence states purpose clearly. Beginning keeps audience reading. Middle delivers on promises of beginning. Ending offers closure and possibly call to action. |
| Tone (related to Language): sounds unprofessional in 3 or more sentences or phrases. Conveys a tone of arrogance (e.g., overly formal phrasing), or is slightly too informal (e.g., uses contractions). | | Tone (related to Language): sounds completely professional in all but one or two sentences or phrases. Conveys a tone of arrogance (e.g., overly formal phrasing), or is slightly too informal (e.g., uses contractions). | | Tone (related to Language): sounds professional, yet forthright. I want to read your resume and I might want to hire you! |
| Language: Order of words confused in several places. Length of words and sentences is distracting or makes it difficult for reader to understand message being emphasized. Unclear in several places. Not enough details to be very useful. Does not stand out in a pile of 100. Language is distracting. | | Language: Order of words, lengths of words and sentences, use of examples are mostly effective and efficient, but are distracting or weak in 1 or 2 places. May be unclear in a couple of places. Some specifics and details are offered to support message, but doesn't particularly stand out. | | Language: Order of words, lengths of words and sentences, use of examples are effective and efficient. Clear, forthright, simple, straightforward. Specifics and details strongly support message. Not distracting. Letter stands out in a pile of 100. |
| Format: Letter fails to follow multiple formatting guidelines (e.g., one big block of text, non-Times font, inconsistent justification or spacing, missing address) | | Format: Letter follows all but one formatting guideline. Looks professional, but one or more elements provide stumbling blocks or distractions to the reader. | | Format: Letter follows all formatting guidelines. Looks professional. Is easy to read quickly and digest. |
| Mechanics: more than punctuation, spelling grammatical or typographical error; poor and/or incorrect word choice/usage. | | Mechanics: max of one typo, punctuation, spelling or grammatical error. Word choice might be improved, but no blatantly incorrect choices/usage. | | Mechanics: no typos, punctuation, spelling or grammatical errors. Correct and highly appropriate word choice/usage. |

- How well was the letter tailored to the Position Announcement?
- How well was the resume tailored to the Position Announcement?

Gina R. Geoscientista

Address street • City, State, Zip • Phone if you want to include it • youremail@u.washington.edu

April 17, 2025

Janice Smartipants
Intern Project Manager
SuperGeo Consultants
5000 University Way
Seattle, WA 98195

Dear Ms. Smartipants:

I am writing to apply for the geology intern position at SuperGeo Consultants. After graduating with a B.S. in geology from the University of Washington in June 2025, I plan to take the WA Fundamentals ASBOG exam and pursue a career in geotechnical consulting. While my current quantitative, field, and laboratory skills are an excellent match for this position, I also am excited to learn new techniques that could help advance SuperGeo's goals.

As a geology major, I have acquired physics and GIS skills, and experience in local stratigraphy and hazard assessment that would be immediately valuable to your team. In geomechanics, seismology, and physics courses I developed strong problem solving skills and facility with Matlab. Many of my course projects included slope stability and seismic hazard analysis in ArcGIS. I completed a 6-week field camp in Montana as well as stratigraphy exercises in the Seattle area. This combination of quantitative skills and field experience in a variety of rock types is well suited to SuperGeo's environmental, geological, hydrological, and geotechnical projects. I am willing to travel as needed to apply these skills in SuperGeo's projects in Washington and beyond.

My previous work prepares me to perform the lab tasks relevant to this position and to communicate the results in both internal and external technical reports. As a research assistant, I prepared sediment samples using wet chemistry and analyzed them using microscopy and U-Pb geochronology. In these and other detail-oriented tasks, my strong work ethic and independence helped me succeed with minimal direction and oversight. In addition to gaining technical expertise, I developed strong communication skills working with research teams at different universities and presenting my work at both research symposia and volunteer events.

My resume is attached, and I will follow up via e-mail next week. Please contact me at the phone number listed above if you would like additional information or a list of references. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Gina R. Geoscientista

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EDUCATION

University of Washington (UW), Seattle, WA 2009-present
B.Sc. in Geosciences, expected June 2013, with Departmental Honors (major GPA: 3.65)
University of Washington 6-Week Field Camp in Dillon, MT 2012
under Prof. Darrel Cowan (GPA from course: 3.4)

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Specialized Coursework: Optical Mineralogy, Stratigraphy, Seismology, Geomechanics, Geochemistry, Thermal Physics, Electromagnetism, GIS
Computer Skills: ArcGIS software, MatLab, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Earth
Lab Techniques: Density Separation, Magnetic Separation, Zircon Ablation for U-Pb dating, Grain Mount Preparation, Mineral Identification, Topographic Map Interpretation
Communication: Technical Report Writing, Public Speaking, Teaching

RESEARCH AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant • Dr. Kate Huntington, UW Earth and Space Sciences (ESS) 2012-present
Examined detrital sands for petrographic provenance studies. Developed a new method of point counting using Electron Microprobe and ImageJ software.
Teaching Assistant, Introduction to Geology (ESS 101) • Dr. Terry Swanson, UW ESS 2012
Taught lab sections with class size of 20-30 undergraduate students. Met weekly with teaching staff to discuss lesson plans, field trips, and criteria for grading lab exercises.
Math Tutor • South Seattle Community College, Seattle, WA 2010-2011
Met with assigned individuals to assist with learning objectives. Subjects covered included algebra, trigonometry, and chemistry.
Customer Service Specialist • Recreational Equipment Incorporated, Seattle, WA 2009-2010
Identified, researched, and resolved customer issues. Processed purchases and returns, and performed other customer service functions.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

“Rock”ing Out K-12 Educational Science Outreach • UW ESS 2010-present
Taught Earth-science lessons in K-12 classrooms in Washington.
Activity Leader, Geology Badge Day at the Burke Museum • Boy Scouts of America 2011
Led hands-on activities and taught mineral and fossil identification to K-5 age children.
Teaching Assistant’s Assistant, Geology 101 Course • UW ESS 2010
Volunteered in multiple lab sections as help for the Lab instructor during weekly labs for undergraduates. 100+ hours logged.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

UW Earth and Space Sciences Joseph A. Vance Endowed Fellowship, 2011
North West Geology Poster Competition, 2nd Place award, 2011

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Student member of the Association of Engineering Geologists (AEG), Northwest Geological Society (NWGS), and Geological Society of America (GSA)

ABSTRACTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Geoscientista, G.R. (2011) Sediment Erosion and Provenance from Heavy Mineral Petrography and Mixing Models in the Eastern Himalayas. Poster presentation at AEG Student Night.

Gina R. Geoscientista

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

Geology Intern Position at SuperGeo Consultants.

SuperGeo Consultants, located in Seattle, WA, seeks full-time intern beginning July 2025.

Responsibilities of this position will involve....

The successful candidate should have obtained or be pursuing a B.S. in geology or related field and plan to take the WA Fundamentals ASBOG exam. Field geology experience is a must. Quantitative and laboratory skills relevant to SuperGeo's projects in environmental, hydrological, and geotechnical areas are desirable, as is willingness to travel to field sites in Washington and in other states. Send cover letter and resume to Intern Project Manager Janice Smartipants.

NOTE:

You will include different categories and emphasize different things to bring out your own strengths and experiences. As a general guideline, put the most impressive stuff near the beginning. There is no "recipe" for a resume, but this is a basic guide to give you some ideas if you are having trouble getting started. Look at examples on the internet, take your draft to the UW career center, then get feedback from your TA and other sources to further polish your resume.

Tips from geotech business owner and President of the Northwest Geological Society

For the resume:

- Fit resume on a single page if at all possible. If resume must extend to >1 page, number the pages.
- Stand out visually. You could add lines at the top or bottom of the page or put your name in a large font.
- Make sure you have NO spelling errors!
- Have a list of references (names and contact information) ready to supply, and make sure your references are informed that you are supplying their names and support you 100%.

For the cover letter:

- If applying for a professional geology position, be sure to mention your intention of taking the WA fundamentals ASBOG exam as soon as you qualify.
- Make sure you have the name of a project manager to send your letter to – not just a human resources person.
- If relevant, mention/show your
 - willingness to travel
 - flexibility
 - eagerness to learn and use new techniques
 - work ethic
 - ability to work independently

Note about Resume Objectives: A resume objective is a short, targeted statement or blurb at the beginning of a resume that reflects what you have already achieved, and how you are a perfect match for the position that is on offer. Including an objective statement is a current trend for positions in industry, government, consulting and the private sector. If the job posting you are "applying" to for this assignment is in one of these areas, include a Resume Objective. Objectives generally are not expected for academic research positions, though resumes for academic positions may include an analogous "research interests" statement or bullet list.

Here are some do's and don't lists for Resume Objectives: <https://uptowork.com/blog/resume-objective>, and some examples for early-career people and students who may not have experience: <https://resumegenius.com/how-to-write-a-resume/career-objective-writing-guide>.

The following is a GEOSCIENCE SPECIFIC primer on Objectives, with commented examples of good and bad objective statements:

Examples of some good and bad "Objectives"

By Kathy Goetz Troost, PhD, LG

The best "objective statement" is one that addresses the job requirements in the same keywords as used in the job announcement. Employers also want to know: if you are looking for full or time-time work and in what discipline you are seeking work. Always avoid passive voice and use action verbs. Try to express enthusiasm since employers are looking for passionate people. Many HR people and prospective employers do not even read the cover letter. But those that do expect the letter to be well written and to provide a concrete example of why you are the best fit for the job. Cover letters and/or resumes with errors end up in the recycle bin over 95% of the time. The same is true for your objective statement.

To gain experience as a geologist working in the field in the Pacific Northwest, and to use my strong work ethic, technical skills, and communication skills to contribute to the success of a long term project. *This one isn't bad, a bit boring. It addresses key words in the job announcement. I'd give it a 3 out of 5, with 5 being the best.*

Joining my geology skills and leadership talents with a passionate and enthusiastic professional team that is dedicated to achieving highest client satisfaction by consistently delivering quality results. *This one is very good since it speaks to the candidate's high standards and indirectly compliments the company. This one also says that the candidate is a leader, something every employer wants to see since it speaks to the ultimate long-term success of the candidate. 5/5*

I am seeking a job as an entry level geologist at TGI and I am confident my Excel skills coupled with my previous experience as a geologist make me a strong candidate for the position. *Not very creative, 2/5. Intriguing about Excel skills however, so if that were a big part of the job,*

this one may garner an interview. The interviewer would be looking hard at the personality of the candidate in this case.

I am seeking a challenging full time position in a small consulting firm as a geologist working with a focus on Pacific Northwest geology. 2/5. Not very inspiring. Has a typo. Doesn't seem like the candidate has much aspiration.

I am seeking a full-time position as a geologist to expand my geologic expertise, work on challenging problems, and have a mix of office, lab, and field work. Ok. Very generic. 2/5, just ok as a default. The candidate would definitely want to tailor this to the job announcement better.

A natural hazard monitoring and research position with a talented organization. This leaves a lot on the table....but it is also intriguing. Simple and to the point. 2/5. Should include more: about the type of position sought, i.e. full time, part time, etc.; and more about the candidate.

Seeking to apply myself in a full-time position in the fields of geomorphology or hydrogeology. Nice that it is more focused. Would benefit from more about the candidate. 3/5

A position that I can devote myself to within the field of geological engineering that focuses on natural hazard mitigation of tsunami, earthquake and landslide disasters. This one rings a few alarm bells...since it states that the candidate has conditions. Not particularly good for an entry-level position. If the phrase "that I can devote myself to" were changed to something more open, this could be a 4/5. As it stands I rate it 2/5

A dedicated problem solver and decision maker who is action-oriented; a skilled communicator and trusted team member who is creative, resourceful and flexible; able to adapt to changing priorities while maintaining a positive attitude and excellent work ethic; exceptional organization and project management skills. This isn't an objective statement at all. This person appears to be overly confident. These are excellent traits, but use specific examples to prove that you are all of these things. 0/5

I am seeking to apply my geologic knowledge, field experience, work ethic, communication skills to the entry level geologist position at Troost Geosciences, Inc. Another typo. Doesn't speak well to the communication skills. If no typo, this one isn't bad. I think it begs for a follow-on statement like "I look forward to gaining more field expertise and expanding my geologic knowledge while working in an applied position", then 4/5

I am seeking an entry-level geologist position with work in either the office or the field to utilize my strong work ethic, computer skills, and communication skills. Ho hum, but 2/5. If the resume was strong, I wouldn't toss this one out.